

HOOKEDNOW

DAVE SKIP RICK
HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

THANK YOU FOR SUBSCRIBING TO *HOOKEDNOW* the online e-zine for fly fishers. Welcome to the June-July issue. Our goal is to entertain and educate with a combination of text, photos, and video. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments at: sweltsa@frontier.com (please include "HookedNow" in the subject line for quicker replies). We also hope you will tell your fishing buddies about HookedNow.

The June/July issue is all about that magic hour just before dark when trout start rising, just not always to your fly. The "evening rise" can be both exciting and frustrating, so this issue is all about how to make that last hour of daylight more successful.

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Photo by Rick Hafele

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RICK HAFELE – EVENING MAGIC



Photo by Dave Hughes

If there is one thing fly fishers hope for it's rising trout! No matter what your preferred method of fishing for trout, I've yet to meet a fly fisher who doesn't get excited when a trout's nose

breaks the surface to suck in a little fly, or senses something primeval when the dorsal fin of a big trout humps up through the surface and disappears again. It is one of those "time stands still" moments. But predicting exactly when this magic will occur can be frustrating at best. That's why the evening rise is so special; one can be sure - well almost sure - of rising trout when daylight fades and evening shadows prevail.

Crepuscular is the term given to activities that occur at twilight. Deer are crepuscular when they move from resting to feeding areas just before dark. The sudden appearance of nighthawks as daylight fades to darkness, or the flurry of bats over a lake at twilight are other examples of crepuscular behavior. A lot of animals find twilight the perfect time to come out of hiding, apparently finding some measure of safety in the mix of light and darkness. I can imagine trout also feel safer near the water's surface just before darkness falls when predators like Osprey or herons lose the benefit of spotting them in bright light. But besides

safety trout need something to rise for. Fortunately for trout and fly fishers, a lot of insects are crepuscular and thus become quite active at twilight as well. That's the beauty, and frustration, of the evening rise: a lot of insects come out and get trout feeding, but it can be very hard to see who is on the water and what the trout are taking!

A number of years ago I had an evening rise to remember on the Deschutes River in Oregon. The Deschutes is a big river with some very well fed trout, but on bright sunny, warm days most stay deep while the sun is on the water. Some trout can be tempted with deeply sunken nymphs, but it's when the final rays of light disappear behind the canyon rim and twilight descends, that the river and the trout come alive.



Photo by Rick Hafele

On this particular evening I was at the tailout of a favorite riffle watching carefully for the first caddis adults to start swarming, first over the tops of the nearby juniper trees, then over the tailout in front of me. The caddis began showing up as planned and I quickly knotted on a low riding caddis dry fly. Right on cue a few rises



Caddis adults swarming above streamside trees before dropping to the water to lay eggs. Photo by Rick Hafele



Hydropsyche, or net-spinning caddis adult is a common caddis on summer evenings. Photo by Rick Hafele

appeared where bits of foam came together in a current seam. Seemed like this was going to be too easy. However, as you have probably guessed, my caddis pattern went untouched while more trout started rising. What the #@\$%! Clearly they were taking something besides caddis.

At that point my attention was drawn to some swallows about twenty feet above the water. It took a while but I finally saw a group of mayfly spinners silhouetted against the light gray sky. "So, spinners must be what those trout are taking," I thought, and promptly changed to a little spinner pattern. You've got it. Once again my fly bounced happily down the riffle so close to rises that the rings knocked my fly sideways half an inch, but not one taker. Now I was getting desperate. In another fifteen or twenty minutes I'd be out of light completely. Luckily I had my pair of small binoculars around my neck. There was still enough light reflecting off the water's surface to get a good look at what was floating downstream not more than thirty feet away from me.

Wow, with the binocs I saw caddis adults, mayfly spinners, a small stonefly adult, and tucked among them all little size 22 midge adults, by the hundreds, drifting and often disappearing in a trout's mouth. I was amazed that all the other insects kept drifting by untouched. It was like an all you can eat buffet where nothing was touched but the sunflower seeds.

Well, I may have arrived at the party late, but after tying on a little Griffith's gnat I finally felt that wonderful throb of a hefty trout heading out into heavy current. Now all I had to do was avoid breaking the 6x tippet!

The above scenario illustrates a number of factors that come into play during many evening rise situations.

1. More than one insect will commonly be abundant during that magic hour before dark.
2. Trout can be just as selective in near darkness as they are at mid day.

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3. It can be very difficult for us anglers to see what's on the water, let alone what the trout are actually taking.
4. Because of the poor light, the color of your pattern isn't as critical in the evening, but matching size is just as important as during the day. So when you are faced with picky trout look closely at the size of the fly on the water compared to the one on the end of your tippet.
5. Finally, there's nothing like the pressure of knowing you only have an hour or so to figure it all out before the bugs disappear and the trout stop rising. What to do?

While the evening rise is a common phenomenon, it doesn't typically occur year round. In most places it becomes consistent during the summer, from say late June through early September, when daytime temperatures are high and insect activity, with the exception of terrestrials, is often sparse mid-day. Once air temperature starts dropping and the bright sun disappears, however, a variety of aquatic insects get active.

Caddisflies are one of the most consistent and important players in this late evening food fest. Not only do mated females return to lay their eggs, but many species emerge under the cover of fading light to avoid the mouths of swallows and other birds. In addition, many, if not most, of the female caddis laying eggs on summer evenings dive underwater and swim to the stream bottom to deposit their eggs, then drift back slowly to the surface where they die. This means a diving caddis adult pattern of the proper size can be critical. There are some very good patterns created just for

this purpose, but in a pinch fishing an elk hair caddis below the surface can work just as well. You'll need a split shot 15 to 18 inches up from your fly so it will sink deep enough and quickly enough. Fish it to rising trout with a down and across presentation. Just make sure you let the fish set the hook when it hits. A hard strike on a tight line below you, almost always translates into a lost fly and fish. This one step of sinking your dry caddis pattern below the surface, will often completely change your success when caddis swarm in the evening and your dry fly is ignored.



Once the sun goes behind the canyon rim expect to see insect activity suddenly pick up and trout responding. Photo by Rick Hafele

Because caddis also emerge in the evening you might find you need a caddis pupa pattern. Hopefully you know what size pattern you should use. When in doubt a size 16 or 14 pupa will often be close. In all likely hood you'll still see rising trout when they are taking pupa, however, the rises will be more of a swirl than a classic surface rise.

Bottom line: Make sure you have a selection of caddis patterns when you fish the evening rise.

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Mayfly spinners end up dead on the water with their wings straight out and flat on the water. This makes them very difficult to see anytime of day, but especially late in the evening. The mating swarms above the water, however, can be relatively easy to see silhouetted against the evening sky. When you see such swarms always be on the lookout for trout taking spinners on the water. Photos by Rick Hafele

Another common and important evening insect is mayfly spinners. Spinner falls create some fantastic dry fly fishing, but unfortunately many anglers fail to recognize when they are on the water. Because spent spinners lie motionless with their wings out flat on the water, they can be very difficult to see. This, plus the fact that many are quite small make them almost invisible from an angler's point of view. But from a trout's point of view, looking up against the sky, even tiny spinners show up like little points of light.

Spinner falls occur when females land on the water to lay their eggs shortly after mating in the air. While the dead spinners are a challenge to see on the water, the large aerial swarms of mating males and females are much easier to spot. Look for their characteristic up-and-down dance ten to fifty feet above the water. During the cool months of the year, mating swarms tend to form in the late afternoon. But during warm weather, spinner falls most often occur at twilight. This makes it even

harder to see the spinners on the water, but again you can usually spot the mating swarms in the sky.

Whenever you see a large number of spinners in the air you can bet that fifteen to twenty minutes later there will be spent spinners on the water. Trout take spinners with very quiet little sipping rises, that are also hard to spot in the fading light of evening. Watch the water carefully, especially where the current forms small eddies and seams that concentrate whatever happens to be floating on the surface. Pattern size will again be most important in picking the right fly. You'll also need a good presentation with no drag to fool selective trout taking spinners. If you're struggling with drag try using a longer tippet, maybe three or even four feet long if it's not windy. This will add some slack in your leader and allow the fly to drift more freely - at least in theory!

Last but not least, midges provide the third and often most frustrating piece to the evening

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rise. Midges belong to the order Diptera and the family Chironomidae, often called chironomids by anglers. There are literally thousands of species of midges, and though a few may be as large as a size 12, the vast majority of species fall into the size 18 to 24 hook range. These little guys can be hard to see in good light, let alone the minimal light conditions just before dark.



Photo by Rick Hafele

You might see midge adults swarming over streamside grasses, but more often they float by undetected.

I've been fooled enough times by trout taking midges instead of much more obvious fare, that I always suspect them when I'm being toyed with by rising trout. The good news is that complicated patterns are rarely needed. The Griffith's gnat is a simple fly that rarely fails to work when trout are taking adult midges on the surface. But just as often trout are feeding on



Photo by Rick Hafele

Trout can be eating a variety of food in the evening, but midges, both adults and pupae, are often on the top of their menu.

midge pupa hanging in or just below the surface film, or midges struggling to escape their pupal skins flush on the surface. It is almost impossible to tell what stage the trout are focusing on, so I most often start with a dry fly like the Griffith's gnat and then if that fails I switch to a pupa pattern or a surface emerger pattern. A drag free presentation will again be your best friend and because the flies are so small don't expect to see them on the water. Watch the "area" where your fly should be for a rise, or fish your midge pattern off of a dropper tied to a larger dry fly, which acts as your strike indicator. It can be challenging, but more than exciting when a really large trout sips your tiny size 22 midge off the surface and jumps into the sunset.

Enjoy and Happy Casts!

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Here are some of my favorite patterns for the Evening Rise.



SIMPLE CADDIS - Tied by Rick Hafele

Hook: Dry fly hook of your choice, size 18-12.

Thread: Brown 8/0.

Rib: Fine gold wire (optional).

Body: Dark brown, gray, or olive dry fly dubbing.

Wing: Small bunch of brown or gray CDC fibers tied in over abdomen in shape of caddisfly wing.

Comments: This very simple pattern floats low on the water, which matches the look of many caddis adults on the surface just before dark. You can also fish it below the surface to effectively match adults diving underwater to lay eggs.



CDC AND ELK CADDIS - Tied by Rick Hafele

Hook: Dry fly hook of your choice, size 18-12.

Thread: Brown 8/0.

Body: CDC feather tied in at bend of hook and wrapped up hook shank creating body and long loose fibers.

Wing: Deer hair tied in over abdomen.

Comments: This fly is described in detail in the book, *Tying Dry Flies*, by Jay Nichols. I'd recommend you check it out as it describes many other useful dry fly patterns besides this one.



SOFT HACKLE OR FLYMPH - Tied by Rick Hafele

Hook: Dry fly hook of your choice, size 18-12.

Thread: Brown or olive 8/0.

Rib: Fine gold wire.

Body: Brown, gray, or olive dubbing.

Hackle: Partridge body feather or other soft hackle like hen hackle or quail.

Comments: The soft hackle fly is a pattern that can imitate many different insects, but it is perhaps best suited as a caddis imitation for either a pupa or wet adult.



RUSTY SPINNER - Tied by Rick Hafele

Hook: Dry fly hook of your choice, size 18-12.

Thread: Brown 8/0.

Tail: Two tail fibers tied in divided.

Body: Dry fly dubbing to match natural. While mayfly duns come in many different colors, the most common color for female mayfly spinners is a rusty brown.

Wing: White poly yarn tied in at right angles to thorax.

Comments: I'd recommend always having a fly box filled with spinner patterns of various sizes and colors. At a minimum carry a supply of the rusty spinner in sizes 18 to 12.

[CLICK HERE](#)

To view video of Rick discussing his favorite fly patterns for the evening rise.

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SKIP MORRIS - THE OTHER MAGIC HOUR



Photo by Rick Hafele

To my wife Carol, who is both a photographer and a fly fisher, the term "magic hour" carries great promise...and frustration. A golden glowing sort of light emerges at the last hour of the day if the sky is clear, and photographers love it, which is why they graced it with that mystical name.

However, at the end of a hot day of sunshine--typically an unproductive day on a trout river--the fish often turn bold in the cover of low light and with the burst of insect activity. In other words, the trout make up for lost time.

And there's Carol, the photographer and fly fisher who has to choose one of her passions over the other. Tough call.

I have no such dilemma. I just go after the fish.

If I sound unsympathetic, well, it's not really that bad for Carol. The last light is only the start of the action--the later it gets, the more limited the photographic opportunities and the better the fishing. She gets in hericks on both accounts.

The fly-fisher's version of the magic hour is called the Evening Rise. It's usually something like

this. Shadows grow as the sun sinks into the horizon. At some point--and it's difficult to say exactly when--it starts: the trout begin working at the river's surface. At first, a single rise, perhaps in the light swirl beside a quick line of current, then another rise from the same fish or maybe from another in the lazy slick of a tail-out. It builds, until trout are dimpling the dark water steadily, and if it's really good, they're eventually showing about everywhere a trout might feed. A quiet frenzy. It's often the most intricate and intense and plain good fishing of the whole day. It's also calm, the air peaceful and silent but for the occasional calls of night creatures and perhaps the steady rush and gurgling from the quick places of the river.

In my own experience, the worse the weather for daytime fishing, the better the evening rise. Of course, bad fishing weather is just the kind most humans seek--bright, hot, and cloudless. Such conditions, especially in the already high temperatures of mid season, make trout



Evening rise time, that magic hour when the wind stops, the water's surface turns to glass, and the trout begin rising. Nothing gets better than this! Photo by Rick Hafele

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Carol without her camera! Photos by Rick Hafele

uncomfortable and predator-wary. On a cloudy cooler day, trout may feed hard and even rise from morning on, and by sunset, be done. So I try to time my fishing to suit these factors.

The worst fishing weather on trout rivers then is those dazzling sizzling days of July and August and early September. That's not consistent--I've seen rivers come alive in mid-August, and on some of those rivers that's the norm. Each river and its trout are unique.

While it's true that trout feel safer from predators after sunset than during the day, they never feel truly safe. And feeding at the surface, they know, exposes them. So don't expect evening rise trout to come easily. Yes, they *may* come easily, but they may instead be a challenge.

For one thing, during the evening rise big dry flies are often ineffective, unless some insect adult that's big--such as the huge October Caddis--is on the water. (Besides, trout slapping down big insects after sunset isn't really the evening rise...it's just evening feeding.) Most of the time, expect to toss small to tiny stuff out there--size 14 caddis dry flies, size-18 BWO spinners, size-22 adult midges....--on tippet no heavier than 5X. And to



drop your flies quietly well upstream from the rises of a trout.

Can't say I've done a lot with nymphs during the evening rise. It seems as though, in such low light, trout are focused on the surface of the water. I suppose it makes sense: the best light will be there, and a significant amount of the food will lie concentrated on or in that plane that is the face of the water, silhouetted against whatever faint glow remains in the sky. But there have been exceptions. More than once I've been able to take evening trout *only* with size 22 and 24 midge-pupa imitations suspended just below a fine tippet treated with floatant--nymphs subsurface, even if only slightly subsurface. I suspect the reason a sunken nymph sometimes turns the trick where the dry fly and half-floating emerger is normally the solution is that the trout are picky and the tiny

suspended nymph is among the most difficult deceptions for trout to penetrate.

But nothing in fishing is certain...thank God! Remember how I said the hot months produce the best evening rises? I recall a dynamite evening rise in October. The day had been chilly, and with the sun's leaving, the air turned downright frigid. Yet on went the trout stirring the dark water with their gentle feeding. But we hooked few fish on dry flies and emergers, and in the end I went to a size-22 midge pupa suspended on 7X tippet, dead drift. As if that's not strange enough--these were *cutthroat* trout. Popular wisdom regards cutthroats as pushovers. And that's the problem with popular wisdom in fishing--it can be dead wrong, even if it's usually right. So the evening rise shouldn't have come on that cold October river and those cutthroats shouldn't have required the subtlest of approaches.

But they did...

On the other end of this theme, you can have ideal conditions for the evening rise yet wait faithfully as it fails to even begin to happen. I can't count the times...

Other times, the trout waited until it was nearly dark to show, and then shortly after that,

when it really was dark, they quit, making for brief action. Such is fishing.

One thing's for sure, a stormy sunset is highly unlikely to produce a decent evening rise.

The insect hatches that draw trout to feed at the surface of a river are always dicey, making you wonder why under reasonable conditions the evening rise is so reliable. For starters, the evening rise really isn't reliable--it's just closer to providing reliable surface action than the rest of a fishing day on a trout stream.

However, true as that is, the evening rise is still surprisingly consistent on the whole. I think the primary fuel behind the evening rise is simply the low light and the sense of freedom that gives the trout--enough light to see but too little light for predators to do their sinister work is a considerable motivation, especially after shunning the dangers of sunshine surface feeding all day. Insects seem to like the low light as well. The spinners of most mayflies return to the water to oviposit in the evening, caddis too, and midges, and many of the stonefly species--there's often plenty on the surface of a river for trout to eat at sundown, and of considerable variety.



Photo by Rick Hafele

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That variety of evening-rise insects ranging from minuscule to hefty fails to explain why I so often do best after sunset with tiny flies--18s, 22s, even 24s, occasionally 26s. You'd think that if not only spec-size midges but substantial stoneflies and caddis are drifting by, the trout would take a size-14 no problem. And sometimes they do, but frequently they don't. Sure, it does seem the more cautious the trout are during the day, the smaller they want their dinner. But even trout that will slam garish Chernobyl Ants all day can change when the sun drops--in the fading light, they suddenly think they're chalk-stream browns. This doesn't always happen, but it happens often enough that if I'm not getting takes after sunset, I keep going with smaller flies and finer tippets until I do get takes.

But sometimes a size 14 dry fly or emerger slams trout all evening, sometimes even a size 12. Keep an open mind--it's your best defense.

Finding your fly on that dark water is a neat trick if it's a 14, but nearly impossible if it's a size 24. Don't let that keep you from the fascination of the evening rise. Just use that same skill that leads your eyes to your dry fly fifty feet out on a choppy river in the daytime; in other words, you know pretty much where the fly is even before you look, after years of dry-fly fishing--just apply that instinct to fishing after sunset. Make the cast, let your gut tell you where the fly is, follow the current at the fly's estimated location as that drifts downstream, strike when a trout shows anywhere near there. Miss a few fish? So what? You'll land some too.

Since the evening rise is about rising trout, tippets are normally pretty fine. You could reason that the low light will allow for 4X or even 3X, but it doesn't seem to work that way--those calm trout

holding only a few inches down get a good look up against the sky's last light. I'll start with 5X if the fly is a size 16 or 18, but if I'm playing with sizes in the 20s, 6X. On the toughest nights, 7X. Perhaps a nine foot leader, three feet of tippet.

Rods, reels, lines? I usually just go with whatever I was using the rest of the day, and for river trout fishing for me, that's a six-weight line on a six-weight rod. I'll probably explain why this is my standard trout rig in some future issue of this magazine. It has something to do with strike indicators and weighted nymphs. Of course without the likelihood of fishing a weighted nymph, you could reach for that four-weight rod when you head back out around sunset...

Get to know the evening rise. It'll save more than a few fishing days. And it's as intriguing and rewarding as trout fishing gets.



If one fly pattern isn't working don't hesitate to change it. But it helps to know what to change it to, so spend a little time observing what trout have to eat both above and below the water. Photo by Rick Hafele

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PATTERNS FOR THE EVENING RISE



CDC Rusty Spinner Rene Harrop

Hook: Light wire, standard length to 1X long, size 20 to 14.

Thread: Brown 8/0 or 6/0.

Tail: Light-blue-dun hackle fibers.

Abdomen: Rust goose biot.

Wings: Light-blue-dun CDC.

Thorax: Rust synthetic dubbing.

Comments: Many mayfly spinner turn rust color, making this a valuable pattern, in a good range of sizes, for the evening rise.



Skaddis Dark Skip Morris

Hook: Light wire, standard length to 1X long, sizes 20 to 10.

Thread: Brown 8/0.

Abdomen: Buoyant synthetic dubbing (Fly Rite, Superfine Dry Fly...).

Wing: Yellow poly yarn over brown poly yarn.

Hackle: One, brown, spiraled over the thorax.

Thorax: Same dubbing as in the abdomen.

Comments: I've trusted the Skaddis for years for caddis and small stonefly hatches, and for those times when it just seemed right for rising trout.



WD 40 Mark Engler

Hook: Light wire, short or standard length, straight or humped sank, sizes 28 to 18.

Thread: Olive-brown 8/0 or finer.

Tail and Wing Case: natural-light bronze mallard.

Abdomen: The working thread.

Thorax: Muskrat.

Comments: The tail and wing case are one uncut section of bronze mallard, covered by the thread through the abdomen. Imitates both hatching blue-winged olive mayflies and hatching midges.

Note: Skip's book *Trout Flies for Rivers* contains all three of these patterns and their variations. His book *Fly Tying Made Clear and Simple II, Advanced Techniques* details the tying of the WD 40 and the CDC Spinner.



Video Clips by Skip

[CLICK HERE](#)

Watch Skip describe his favorite fly patterns for evening fishing



[CLICK HERE](#)

Skip gives you a first hand lesson in tying on CDC spinner wings.

DAVE HUGHES – PATTERNS & TACTICS FOR THE EVENING RISE



Photo by Rick Hafele

The single constant that cuts across evening rises is seemingly abrupt change. Trout are doing one thing, you've figured it out, and you're catching them fine. Then suddenly what you've been

cleaned me out so often that I ran through a dozen or so of those slender flies, tied to fragile 6X tippets, before evening came slowly on, and the trout suddenly wouldn't have anything to do with anything suspended.

I ran through the usual frantic litany of changes, then suddenly realized I was out there to enjoy myself, not flagellate myself. So I sat down on the bank of the pond, in the near darkness, and discovered I was in one of the most beautiful settings in the world. The sun had set behind the distant Cascade Mountains, outlined them starkly, blackly, from behind. The sky had turned as black as the silhouettes of those upthrust mountains. A patchwork of high clouds caught by the settled sun, and ignited red by it, reflected off the water, and gave the surface what little light it had left.

doing ceases to work, and on account of accumulating darkness, it's almost impossible to figure out what has happened, and what to do about it. Close observation is almost always the key to successfully solving these situations.

One of my favorite evening rises happens almost nightly in spring and early summer on one of my favorite high-desert ponds. It's small, isolated, largely unknown and therefore ignored. It contains some big trout, which makes its problems well worth trying to solve. The first time I encountered this particular evening rise, light had dwindled to a dim reflection of a red sky on the pond's surface, where all sorts of mayhem was going on.

I'd been doing fine all afternoon, fishing midge pupa patterns, specifically size 14 Zebra Midges suspended about a foot beneath chartreuse yarn indicators--I use the plural not because I fished the flies in pairs, but because the big trout



Photo by Rick Hafele

At evening, on stillwaters all across the continent, and on many others as well, midges scoot across the water, and trout take chase. If you've got the right fly, you can get in on the game.

The main defining thing I noticed on that still surface were almost continual black noses poking out of the water, sipping something. I had my constant binoculars, so I aimed them out

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Photo by Dave Hughes

Many more complicated flies have been tied to match buzzers, but I've found that by adding an extra hackle, palmered over the body of an Adams, I'm able to skate the fly, in imitation of the behavior of the naturals.

among the rises, just to get a closer view of those trout. What I was able to see through them informed my fishing the next evening, and for a lot of evenings, on a lot of ponds and lakes, ever since.

The surface was covered with small, dark midge adults, swirling, scooting, stopping to sit still, like size 16 balls of cottonwood fluff blown about on a breeze, only the pond was windless. British call them 'buzzers', and it's easy to see why: their wings whizz, and they buzz along, right on the surface, sometimes leaving soft V-wakes that draw up much larger Vs made by trout calculating their trajectories. Without binoculars, I could see the trout, but not what they were taking. With binoculars, I could follow the flight of a single midge, etched against the slightly red-shining surface, among hundreds or thousands of its kind, until its adventure got punctuated by a black nose arisen.

It was too late to do anything about it that evening. The next day, before hitting the pond with the usual, and as usual successful, suspended midge pupae, I set up the portable tying vise in the

tent trailer, and tied a half dozen size 16 Adams, but with extra hackles palmered over their bodies, to aid in the buzz.

When the same set of beautiful evening conditions arrived, and the same trout suddenly disdained my pupa patterns, I switched to a long tippet and one of the buzzers. I began calculating the trajectories of the trout themselves: plotting the direction of their rises as they set their sights on the buzzing midge adults: one rise, two rises, set the fly where the next would be. I'd draw the fly a foot over the surface, then drop the rod tip, let the fly sit still.

Satisfyingly often, that plotted third rise would occur, and the reflective surface of the pond would be destroyed by the cavorting of a trout. I took one throat pump sample before quitting, from a three-pound rainbow, squirted the contents into a vile filled with alcohol. When I examined it in the light of the next day, the dividing line in the trout's feeding pattern was clearly defined. It contained perhaps two dozen midge pupae, in states of



Photo by Dave Hughes

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digestion from almost pulp to fairly fresh. It also held a dozen or so midge adults, all perfectly preserved: all freshly taken by the trout before I caught the trout, robbed it of its dinner, and pickled those midges in alcohol. It was easy to see almost the near-night moment at which the trout had turned its attention from pupae to adults.

Another puzzling evening rise happens on the Deschutes River, in late June and on into July and even August. You've fished those quiet nights, when the wind has finally dropped to

Photo by Dave Hughes



Many evenings on waters like the Deschutes River, the air is full of adult caddis, and trout seem to be feeding on the surface. It's sometimes true, but more often, the caddis are diving down to lay their eggs, and trout are taking them just sub-surface.

nothing, and the air is filled with caddis adults. They buzz around, so many of them chasing each other's tails that they form halos in the air over treetops, above sagebrush tops. Just as many of them fly out over the water, and it's easy to see they're getting onto it, and trout are rising to take them. You know enough about entomology to know they're *Hydropsyche*, spotted sedges, and that a size 14 or 16 Elk Hair Caddis is the perfect

match for them. In fact, like me, you've been fishing the edges all day with just that fly, and have been doing very well with it.

But evening comes on, and the Elk Hair suddenly ceases to interest trout. Those splashy rises, it turns out, are indications of sub-surface feeding, not feeding on top.

The caddis adults belong to a brand that lays its eggs under the water. They fly above the water, usually where it's somewhat calm, then they dive, poke themselves through the surface, and begin stroking toward the bottom, to get a grasp on rocks or logs down there, and then to hold on and patiently deposit their eggs. Trout are acutely aware of what's going on. They hold high in the mild currents, and take the diving caddis adults so near the surface that their rises break through to the top. It looks like they're taking the adults dry.

Photo by Dave Hughes



*Spotted sedge adults, in the genus *Hydropsyche*, lay their eggs by swimming down to the bottom. When they're out in great numbers, usually at evening, you will often do better with a sunk fly than you will with a floating imitation.*

They're not.

It's also not clear that this adult activity stands alone. Many times, it seems to be mixed in with an emergence of pupae of the same species.

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I'm not certain of this, because I've never ceased casting long enough to take a throat sample during fishing that is so good...once you've managed to figure out that the solution is a wet fly or nymph, not a dry. Then it suddenly becomes easy.

Photo by Dave Hughes



At times, spotted sedge pupae get into the evening mix. When they do, trout will feed on adults diving down to lay their eggs, and on pupae rising up for emergence, both at the same time.

The solution can be as simple as suspending a wet fly or pupal pattern right off the stern of the dry fly you've been fishing, on about eighteen inches of 4X or 5X tippet. That way you're offering trout a choice, and you can easily see which fly they prefer. It also lets you determine exactly when the switch in interest occurs, from the surface to the area just beneath it.

I've had better fishing by removing the dry fly, replacing it with a wet or nymph, and fishing the subsurface fly on a very slow mended swing. That might reflect my preference for fishing old-fashioned wets, however, and also for fishing with the minimum number of trinkets, such as strike indicators and split shot, on my leader. I'm not opposed to any of that; it's just that if I can avoid it and still catch what I consider my share of trout, I'm happier without them. So I often swing a size 12 to 16 Hare's Ear winged wet fly, as an imitation of the swimming adults, or a size 14 to 16 Gold

Ribbed Hare's Ear nymph, as an imitation of the rising pupae. I've never found myself doing poorly if I switch to a size 14 or 16 Beadhead Hare's Ear Pupa.

Photo by Dave Hughes



You can match diving, egg-laying spotted sedges with a Hare's Ear wet fly (left), or try either a roughly-tied Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear (center) or Beadhead Hare's Ear Pupa (right) when trout are feeding on both adults and pupae.

The key, in the face of this evening switch in the trout's attention from surface fare to sunk stages of the same insect, is to switch yourself: from floating flies to those that sink and swim.

Another difficult evening rise happened to me the first time on Fall River, a spring creek in central Oregon that flows through dense stands of jackpines. It was a warm mid-summer day, and various mayflies had been coming off almost all day. Trout would focus on a few lesser green drakes, and I'd use a size 14 Olive Quigley Cripple to catch a few of them. Then they'd switch to a scattering of pale morning duns, and it was easy to read the situation, change to a size 16 PMD Compara-dun, catch a scattering more. In the afternoon, a scant hatch of size 20 BWOs prodded a few trout into rising. It was not an easy situation to solve, because the naturals were so few and so

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small, and the trout rising to them so careful and concealed in their sipping. But the duns were visible, and it was not difficult to match them with a tiny Olive Cut-wing Parachute. A scant few trout were happy about that.

Then it became evening, and the game abruptly changed. All the duns were gone, but the trout continued rising. But it was in a strange pattern, and I couldn't fathom it, nor could I see anything on the water to prompt it, until I realized a flurry of rises would erupt quickly every time a breeze wafted through the pines, then subside a few minutes after the wind died down.

I stopped fishing, lay on my belly, and peered over the edge of a grassy bank, onto a long flat beneath a stand of trees. It took no time at all to notice a few trout rising the length of the flat, but a long time to notice that they were taking tiny bark beetles awash in the surface film. Then it all made sense. A wind would hit the trees. The branches would sway. A cascade of the beetles would fall to the water. The trout would feed on them eagerly, but with the tiniest of sipping rises. When they'd

Photo by Rick Hafele



These bark beetles came out of a trout's stomach. Beetles frequently get blown out of trees and onto the water, most often at evening. If you can't discover what trout are taking, suspect beetles.

Photo by Dave Hughes



A Black Crowe Beetle (left) or a higher-floating and more visible Black Foam Beetle (right) will almost always fool trout when they're taking beetles, and for some mysterious reason, almost as often when they're not.

cleaned the beetles up, the rises would cease, and would not begin again until the next breeze batted the trees, delivered new provisions.

I tied on a size 20 Black Crowe Beetle, tied with dyed deer hair, and began fooling a few of the trout in the failing light. But it was impossible to see the fly on the water, and after a fish or two the cranky fly would be impossible to keep afloat, and I'd have to change it out. When it became too dark to do that, I was forced to quit. Since then, though, I've switched to the higher-floating Black Foam Beetle, with its little yellow foam marker, and have been able to do better whenever such situations arise.

It's become such a common phenomenon that I now go right to a tiny foam beetle whenever trout sip but I can't see what they're taking. I always suspect beetles.

I also often suspect that the trout are taking something else, heaven knows what, but they're willing to accept a beetle pattern even when that's not near what they're engaged upon. Bad luck for them. If they're willing to take a beetle pattern, I'm more than willing to furnish one.

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